

Sūrah Al-Qadr

(The *Qadr*)

This Sūrah is Makkī, and it has 5 verses

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ
الْقَدْرِ لَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾ تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ
رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it (the Qur'an) down in the Night of *Qadr*.
[1] And what may let you know what the Night of *Qadr* is? [2] The Night of *Qadr* is much better than one thousand months. [3] The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of your Lord, along with every command. [4] Peace it is till the rising of dawn. [5]

Occasion of Revelation

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has reported from Mujāhid (as *mursal ḥadīth*) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was told about a *mujāhid* [warrior in the cause of religion] from amongst the Children of Israel who carried weapons of war on his shoulders for a thousand months during which time he never laid down his arms. The Companions were amazed when they heard this. On that occasion, this Sūrah was revealed which describes that worship in the Night of *Qadr* granted to this *Ummah* exceeds by more than a thousand months of *jihād* persistently fought by that warrior. According to another narration of Mujāhid cited in Ibn Jarīr, a worshipper from among the Children of Israel used to worship Allah the whole night, and

as soon as the dawn broke, he would arm himself and fight the whole day. This continued consecutively for a thousand months. This Surah was thus revealed. This shows the superiority of the *Ummah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and that the Night of *Qadr* is a special characteristic of this *ummah*. [Maḏharī].

Meaning of The Night of *Qadr*

One meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'greatness, honour or dignity'. Zuhri and other scholars have assigned this meaning to it. The night is called the Night of *Qadr* because it is a night of greatness, honour, majesty and dignity. Abū Bakr Warrāq has stated that this night is so called because a person becomes a man of honour and dignity on account of repentance, seeking pardon and righteous acts during this night, whilst prior to this he might have lacked honour and dignity on account of unrighteous life he might have led.

Another meaning of the word *Qadr* is 'predestination'. From this point of view, the night is so called because the destiny of individuals and nations that was decided in pre-eternity is assigned to the relevant angels who are appointed for cosmic planning. Every man's age, death, sustenance, rain and other things are measured out to the angels to be implemented for a complete year from one month of Ramaḏān to another. If an individual is destined to perform Ḥajj in the forthcoming year, it will be prescribed. According to Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه, there are four angels in charge of cosmic planning: [1] Isrāfīl; [2] Mīkā'īl; [3] 'Izrā'īl; and [4] Jibra'īl عليهم السلام.

It is clearly stated in [44:3-5]

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

We have sent it down in a blessed night, (because) We had to warn (people). [3] In that (night), every wise thing is decided [4] through a command from Us. We were to send the Messenger [5]. (44:3-5)

'*Laylatun Mubārakah*' or the 'blessed', according to overwhelming scholars of the Qur'an, refers to the Night of *Qadr*. The angels record and

descend with whatever Allah has destined or decreed for the coming year. Some scholars hold that the 'blessed night' in 44: 3 refers to the fifteenth night of *Sha'bān*, that is, '*Laylatul Barā'ah*' or the 'Night of Immunity'. This view may be reconciled with the former one by holding that the initial Divine decrees are decided on the Night of Immunity, and the details are recorded and handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. This is supported by a narration of Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه which Baghawī has recorded on the authority of Abū-Ḍuḥā which states that Allah decrees all cosmic matters on the Night of Immunity, but they are only handed over to the relevant angels on the Night of *Qadr*. [Maḏharī].

Date of the Night of *Qadr*

It is explicitly stated in the Qur'ān that the Night occurs in the blessed or auspicious month of Ramaḏān, but its exact date has not been disclosed. As a result, it is disputed and debated among scholars. There are about forty opinions recorded. Maḏharī states that the most authentic opinion is that the Night of *Qadr* occurs in the last ten nights of *Ramaḏān*, but no specific date has been fixed. It could be any of the last ten odd nights which may alternate from year to year. According to authentic Traditions, it could be one of the following nights: 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29. Thus all the apparently conflicting Traditions relating to the odd nights are reconciled. All the Traditions pertaining to the date of the Night are authentic, and there is no need for any convoluted interpretation. Most eminent jurists - like Abā Qilābah, Imām Mālik, Imām Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, Sufyān Thawrī, Iṣḥāq Ibn Rahwaih, Abū Thawr, Muzanī, Ibn Khuzaymah and others - agree that the Night occurs in the last ten odd nights, alternating. Imām Shāfi'ī has two opinions. In one he sides with the majority, and in another he holds that the night is fixed and does not alternate. [Ibn Kathīr].

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah's رضي الله عنها narration is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Bukhārī, according to which the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "تحرّوا ليلة القدر في العشر الأواخر من رمضان" "Look for the Night of *Qadr* in the last ten nights of Ramaḏān." Ibn 'Umar رضي الله عنه narrates, as recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "فاطلبوها في الوتر منها" "Search for it in the last ten odd nights of Ramaḏān." [Maḏharī].

The Value and Importance of the Night and a Special Du'ā for the Night

The greatest virtue of the Night is mentioned in the Sūrah itself, that is, the acts of worship performed in this single night is better than worship in one thousand months which amounts to eighty-three years and four months. The figure here and elsewhere in the Qur'ān does not signify its precise number, but simply denotes a very large or high number. Allah alone knows how much more or better.

It is recorded in Bukhārī and Muslim on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "He who spends the Night of *Qadr* in the worship of Allah, all his past sins will be forgiven." Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "All the angels resident at the 'Lote Tree of the Uttermost Boundary' descend in the leadership of Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام and greet every believer, man or woman, except one who takes wine or eats pork." Another narration reports that anyone who is deprived of the good of the Night of *Qadr* is in fact deprived of all good. On the Night of *Qadr* some people experience and witness special *anwār* [lights]. However, it may be noted that this is not experienced or witnessed by all and sundry nor is it part of the blessings and reward of the Night. Therefore, people should not concern themselves about it.

Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها once asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ what supplication she should make if she finds the Night. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ advised her to make the following supplication: **اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ تَحِبُّ** "O Allah! Verily, You are the Oft-Pardoning, You love to pardon, so do pardon me." [Qurṭubī].

Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān

Verse [1] **إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ** "We sent it [the Qur'ān] down in the Night of *Qadr*." This verse makes explicit that the Holy Qur'ān was revealed on the Night of *Qadr*. This could have one of two meanings: [1] the entire Holy Qur'ān was revealed on this Night from the Preserved Tablet. Then Sayyidnā Jibra'īl عليه السلام, according to the exigency of circumstances, brought it down to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ piecemeal over a period of twenty-three years; and [2] it is related that the first revelation,

consisting of the opening verses of Sūrah [96], took place in the month of Ramaḍān on the Night of *Qadr*, when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was at his devotion in the cave of Hira'. The rest of the Qur'an was revealed little by little according to the need of different occasions.

All Heavenly Books were revealed in Ramaḍān

Sayyidnā Abū Dhar Ghifārī ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Holy Prophet Ibrāhīm's ؑ Scriptures were revealed on 3rd of Ramaḍān; Torah was revealed on 6th of Ramaḍān; Injīl was revealed on 13th of Ramaḍān; Zabūr was revealed on 18th of Ramaḍān; and the Holy Qur'an was revealed on 24th of Ramaḍān." [Mazharī].

Descent of the Angels and the Spirit with Divine Decrees

Verse [4] تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ (The angels and the Spirit descend in it, with the leave of their Lord, along with every command.) 'Spirit' here refers to Jibra'il ؑ.

Sayyidnā Anas ؓ narrates that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "When the Night of *Qadr* occurs, Jibra'il ؑ descends on the earth with a huge throng of angels and all of them pray for every servant of Allah, man or woman, busy in *ṣalāh* or *dhikr*, to be blessed by Allah." [Mazharī]. In the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ (along with every command), the preposition *min* is used in the sense of 'with' as in [13:11] مِنْ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ يَحْفَظُونَهُ. The verse under comment means the angels bring down, during the Night of *Qadr*, the decree for everything destined to occur in the coming year. Some of the commentators, like Mujāhid and others, say that the phrase مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin* is syntactically related to *salām*, and the word 'Amr means 'every thing'. Thus they interpret the statement to mean: 'The night is a security from every evil, harm and calamity.' [Ibn Kathīr].

Verse [5] سَلَامٌ (Peace it is till the rising of dawn.) The word *Salām* [peace] stands for a complete sentence meaning 'it is all peace, equanimity and complete goodness, having no evil in it.' [Qurṭubī]. Some scholars treat the word *Salāmun* as a sentence qualifying مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ *min kulli amrin*, meaning 'the angels come with every such matter which is good and peace'. [Mazharī].

هِيَ حَتَّى مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ The concluding expression of the verse means the blessings of the Night of *Qadr* are not restricted to any particular part of

the night. They start descending at the fall of night and continue till the break of dawn.

Special Note

According to there verse 'The Night of Power is better than a thousand months' which equals eighty-three years and four months. Obviously, each year will contain a *laylatul Qadr* which will be better than a thousand months. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will recur *ad infinitum*, that is, repeat or continue without an end. For this reason, some of the commentators say the expression 'more than a thousand months' does not include nights of *Qadr*. Thus this should not pose any problem. [Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Mujāhid].

On account of geographical positions, the time will vary from place to place. As a result, the Night of *Qadr* will not occur in all the regions of the world simultaneously. This is not a problem because people of each location should calculate and consecrate the night and receive its blessings according to their geographical position. Allah, the Pure and Exalted, knows best.

Ruling

If anyone performs the 'Ishā' and Fajr *ṣalāhs* in congregation, he will receive the blessings and reward of the Night of *Qadr*. The more one performs acts of worship in this night, the more he shall receive its blessings. It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim that Sayyidnā 'Uthmān رضي الله عنه narrates that the Messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "If a person performs his 'Ishā' *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending half the night in devotion; and if he performs Fajr *ṣalāh* in congregation, he will attain the blessings of spending the entire night in devotion."

Alḥamdulillah
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Qadr
Ends here